CHAPTER L.

Alan Merridew held Minnie Royal's two ads fast clasped in his own, and kept hem pressed against his breast. Her facas deadly pale, her eyes were brimming with tears, her lips were gray and tremding, she was trying to be firm.

As for Alan himself, the moment put a train upon his munhood greater than he ad known before. The pair, together with their surroundings, would have made a tine subject for a painter's canvas under the lile of "The Parting," everything around lent itself to the telling of the story of the

A cold, chilly, gray fog was slowly thinning, so that the dirty water of the Thames, with all the multi-rigged craft that, moving or stationary, flowing upon its waters, near by, were dimly discernible. The craft, it is true, had a special look when en through the thinning base.

The lovers were standing upon the deck an outward-bound ship, that, with anchor up and down, lay off Gravesend, The year was in the early fifties. onth was November. The time of day was

7:45 in the morning. Part of the crew, forward, stood inside the bars of the capstan waiting for the order to break out anchor. Aft, close by the wheel, stood the cuptain and the plat, the temper of the latter getting more and more touchy as the precious mom Teurs atoms by and his nose grew bluer with the raw cold of the morning.

"I guess." he muttered, "'as how them'ere turtle-doves aint never heard that 'ere fur nobody.' Bo of they don't soon say 'tat-ta,' I guess we'll have to send a pair shears forward to 'em jist to cut the

Interview short." The watchman who walted to take his fare back to the shore, growing chilled, becan to best his hands across his broast to infuse some life into them,

Some sense of the urgency of time and tide began at last to break in upon the ab corbed mind of Alan Merridew, and he clanced around and aft. The kindly captain caught his eye, looked toward the pilot. raised his eye-brows, then called out pleasantly, "Yes, Mr. Merridew, I think we must really say 'good-by,' as every moment of this tide is worth its weight in

Alan whispered something into the girl's ear. Her brimming eyes were lifted to his as he spoke, there was a look of almost absolute terror in them so awful seemed this moment of separation. The great glittering tears rained down as she dropped her face upon his breast.

With another whispered word, a word strong in intensity of love, and tender with the weight of his own sense of pain at the parting, he drew her face unward, and kissed her passionately as he murmured. "Good-by, my own darling! good-by, and may God bless and keep you through all until we meet again."

As his kisses fell upon her lips, his words upon her ear, and she noted the buskiness tremor in his voice, the call upon her to be brave met a grand response. Like the touch of dawn upon the night-darkened earth, a smile came into her sad face; her lips, lost their grayness, ceased to tremble, now replied to his benediction with "God bless you, Alan, Forgive me for breaking down-and I meant to help you being oh, so strong-Good-by, my darling! Good-by!"

She looked straight into his eyes; that look remained with him as a beacon light, and as an inspiration through all the vicissitudes of the days that were to come. Once more he gathered her in his arms, their last greetings were exchanged, and he handed her tenderly down into the boat.

Conciliating the boatman with the gift a half sovereign, Alan watched and waved to his flances until his mist-bilinded eyes, and the thick shore fog, hid the boat and its occupants from sight.

The sailors' feet that tramped round the capstan were leaden; the breasts they sed against the ash bars were sad and thing; their shanty song was poorly austained because of the lump that would persist in rising in many of their throats, yet with all this the anchor was soon broken out, run up, catted and finshed and the versel began to forge swiftly ahead.

watched the ship as long as she could see face and form of her lover, but when the last faint outline of his dear form ted away in the fog, which had begun again to thicken, then she buried her face in her hands and sobbed softly to her-

"Pore young thing!" murmured the old mahogany-faced watchman, "This sort o' thing allus reminds me o' weamin' time for a calf or a babby." All unconsciously to herself, Minnle sob-

bed out loud the words, "Oh. Alan!" The old man caught the sorrowful es, half-paused in his pulling, then with a dublous shake of the head continued his audible soliloguy, "Ah! there yer ar!

That's where the rub comes in, an' allus does in these cases. The pore thing have a been feelin' all along as how her young man was all her own, an' wot belongs to us, as is ours, we likes to keep, 'cos somehow it don't feel like our'n when it's out o' our sight. This yer bout's mine, an' allu will be, I 'opes, but suppose she breaks her painter some night an' drifts all out down past the Nove an' I never claps eyes on it agin, well, the boat may be mine all the same, but its lost to me. Seems like that's how some o' these poor young things of his mind. feels when they kisses their sweethearts 'good-by,' they ain't sure about 'em when they breaks their moorin's an' drifts out to they furrin' parts. The old waterman's judgment of Minnie

Royal's thought was very far from the truth. She never doubted her lover. The old salt had spoken foud enough for

her to hear every worl, but only a meaningless murmur ever reached her absorbed

"God bless you, miss, an' give your good gennelman's safe v'yage an' a smart return," was the boatman's parting word as he helped the silent girl out on to the little rickety landing stage.

In an aimless way, yet with a kind of blind instinct, Minule Royal went wearily over the dirty streets, straight to the rail-

way station. she shivered with the cold, but the toy grasp of sorrow and sadness were upon her heart so that she had no immediate sense

of the physical chill that gripped her. She had an hour to wait at the station The ladies' waiting-room was empty, but cheery with the blaze of a great fire that roared and crackled in the wide grate. As she sat by the fierce glow her body slowly thawed. The blood flowed faster through her veins. The teiness of her grief broke down and she wept warm, womanly tears

that helped her. The rattle of a spoon in a saucer, near by, aroused her from her deep, sorrowful slumbering, long-fasting appetite and she there came a large-made, raw-boned,

knew that she was hungry. screened glass partition was all that separated the waiting, from the refreshment-room. Passing out on to the platform, she made her way into the refreshment-room. There were no dandles about. comely-faced girl behind the bar could find time to wait upon a lady, and in less than seven minutes Minnie was Above and behind the cube mountain of For the first ten minutes of that meal in the middle of a cozy little meal, the baggage, there showed the face of a negro, there were scarcely more than the same

chief charm of which, to her, was a pot

of steaming, fragrant tea. The meal did her good. She told herself that she could not eat, that It would be hameful to eat at such a sorrowful time. but somehow each mouthful taken paved the way for two others to follow, until she had eaten a very fair meal.

toin-leaf hat

"De wind blow east, de wind blew west

An' ebery poor soul dat nebber did pray

The mounted singer was by this time

"Didn't my Lord d'liber Dan'l, Dan'l

rascully Pench-blossom, what you up to

"Sakes alive, massa!" he cried, "war you

gone done tumble for sure 'nutt ef Peach-

In the nimblest, and most awkward

"Hou yer du, massa" he asked gravely.

Alan in a few words explained his situa-

The mule bounded fifty feet away, kicked

up his legs in the wildest, most frantic

over on his scrubby back, uttering strange

"Will he come back to you when

little noises of pleased delight.

dismounted and came to Alan's side.

trick fur now-" when his eye fell upor

Him blow like de shudgement day,

'Il be glad to pray that day."

melody, in the refrain:

Snickn'd a passed yer."

pickdiskerment?"

stand or walk.

air deserter."

habe a good roil."

mule finally make off.

An' why -

tener:

Hefore she had half realized how the tim spect, the up train came in, and she was rushing away toward London. Minnie was the orphaned daughter of parents who had died when she was 10 years old. Left to the care of her only brother, who was 16 years older than herself, she had lived with film ever since, and between the pair there existed the strongest bond of affection,

CHAPTER II.

Uncle Snick and Penchblossom. Through a long, wild gully, then along the of of a dry watercourse, over piles of fantastically grouped bowlders and huge, rough snags of rock, a solitary horseman surrosed his slow, weary way.

Horse and rider were slike tired. Aloud, the man had just told the beas that, as soon as this waterbed was cleared nd they had not up into the belt of wood that could be seen half a mile away, they

would halt and camp for the night. Of course, the horse understood the pur port of this piece of good news, and equally of course the low whinny that escaped him was his way of expression delight.

The beast had a right to be tired, since he had traveled almost incessantly for twelve hours, hearing, besides his master. small rolled-up tent, with sundry other possessions of tools and food, etc.

That last half mile was almost accomplished, the horse was struggling up a steep slope of broken ground, was within six feet of the level ground above, when he stumbled with tiredness and shot his master

For a moment or two the man, Alan Merridew, lay stunned and still, then slowly, painfully came back to consciousness. After a time he tried to rise, but sank down again half fainting, he could not use his manner, then lying down he rolled over and left foot, and his ankle pained him hor-

His horse, philosopher that it was, having fully decided that he was of no present use to his master, had found a natch of rough feed a little distance off and was ontentedly munching his supper.

The silence and solitude were profound Alan could almost hear the beat of his own heart. At another time he would have en joyed the rugged grandeur and solemn si lence of the place, but new it falled to impress him with any emotion other than a sense of the awkwardness of his situa-

"If I was only stranded on one of the emmon highways of the country," be murmured, "I might soon be helped by some passer-by, but here ----

He gazed around everywhere, and his face fell as he thought how remote were his chances of help in such an out-of-the-way wild as that in which he found himself. A rush of tiny wines, close to him broke into his musing, his eye, following the rush, saw a lark fluttering up in its flight skyward. Swifter, stronger beat the tiny wings bearing the pinin brown body higher and

higher. The bird had broken into song, and now, soaring, and singing filled all the space aloft with the liquid music of his glad song.

Up, up, up it went, until the strained eye of Alan Merridew saw only a quivering speck against the hard hot looking sky above him.

Then as he watched the speck, he saw how it swayed to and fro, grew larger, came nearer, then fell in sudden terkings, until its song was again full and clear.

Anon it paused in its droppings, and floating on still and outstretched wings. gave vent to trill and run of many sweet notes, before it dropped, like a spent arrow, to the earth, and into a tuft of coarse grass not three yards from where the watching Alan lay.

The whole incident, simple in itself, yet so fraught with joyous made Alan forget his own plight for the time, and now diverted his thoughts into another and healthier channel.

"Are ye not worth more than many sparrows? Minnle would ask me," he said softly over to himself, "And she would bid me pray to God for help in my dilem-

This mental utterance of Minnie's name had the effect of once more changing th current of his thought, and for awhile he forgot all else save his absent lover.

Coming back to every-day things, he began to muse on the subject of prayer, in the abstract. "How," he asked himself, "does prayer

work? how can any appeal of mine reach the ear of an unseen God, and bring an answer of help or blessing back?" "How," asked a voice within him, "does

rour brain communicate an order to your

foretinger and thumb when you write a letter, and compel that same finger and thumb to answer the order of your brain, by writing the very words you commanded? 'Don't know?' he murmured aloud.

"Yet it is so, is it not?" "Certainly!" he replied to himself.

"Why is it so?" came the next question.

"Because there is an unseen but living onnection between the two-the brain and the finger. I suppose," he said musingly, "Exactly the same is it with prayer, when

there is a living connection between God and the soul," replied the hidden thought As he held this silent converse with him-

self he suddenly realized that the whole argument was a modified reflection of a conversation that had passed between Minnie and himself, long, long ago.

The sun was now drooping fast. In an hour or little more it would set. The prospect before him, for the night, was grim one. Bedless, blanketless, foodless, it looked as if he would have to spend the

night just where he lay.
"I would pray for help," he mused, "if there was any living connection between my soul and God, but I know there is not and

moment that his teeth set with a sudden sharp map. His ears seemed momentarily

dosed by the action. When once more they opened, the rich voice evidently of a negro came rolling up the gulley, singing:

my lord d'liber, Dan'l, d'liber Dan't. An' why not ebery man? De moon run down in a purple stream,

De sun forbear to shine An' ebery star disappear

King Jesus shall be mine." Alan Merridew's heart gave a great leap of joy, for he knew that help was at hand. Raising himself upon his elbow he saw in the ditsance a sight that, in spite of his pain, provoked a smile within him. Clambering surefcotedly over the rough

bowider-strewn bed of the watercours hideously ugly mule. On its back was a mountain of baggag securely lashed in an almost solld cube. On either side of the scrubby hide of the

mule there hung a short broad pannler. Below the panniers, swaying loosely about were two huge, bare black feet and ankles.

mart as we likes wid de good victuals

Uncle Spick's Legacy.

number of words exchanged between Alan and the negro, each were too intent upon their food. After a time, however, their

As Alan Merridew took in all this, the rich tones of the black's voice rolled up-ward along the gullyway in words strangely tongues were loosened. "How massa come out to sich a unforappropriate to the recent thought of the lis saken, disfortunate place as dis? Him lose

him party, eh?" asked the negro. "No, uncle," said Alan, smilling, "I didn't one my party, I left them. The fact is, I have been gold-seeking ever since I came out from England, and had nothing but bad luck. The last place I was in didn't pay for within half a dozen yards of the prostrate my food, let alone anything else. Hearing Alan, but absorbed with his song he saw whisper of gold having been found over at Kelly's Brook, I made my plans and slipped nothing, and his voice broke out in fuller off alone and was on my way thither, when my horse threw me two hours ago.

"On you's way to Kelly's Brook, massa!" said the negro. "Grashus goodness, you's The sudden stopping of the mule broke firty mile out o' de road dat lead ter dat into the negro's song. The latter had just begun to rate his beast, saying, "My! you place."

Then where does this road lead to, it road it can be called?" asked Alan, "and where are you bound to Uncle " For a moment or two the negro was st-

lent, his eyes fixed upon the pannikin of blossom hadna seen yer, ah, guess Unku coffee before him. Then, slowly lifting his head, and looking searchingly into Alan's face, he said, "19ts looking fashion imaginable, Uncle Snick erry strange lan' to lib in, massa, sin' de gold bin foun', an' etery ones got ter be keerfu' who dey talks to in desc time, but

"Wots de mischief? hed yer coma in his some road I likes massa's face, an him voice mon' speshul, an' berry likely de Lord let me meet him kinder o' purpose, so I goin' tion, adding, that though he was sure no to trus' massa. bones were broken, yet the sprain of his He lowered his voice almost to a whisper. ankle was too servere to permit him to leaned forward toward Alan, as he continued, "I goin' arter gold, war no one else

"Whar dat hoss o'yourn, massa, I wonknows, an' war there am piles on't waitin' ders," replied Uncle Snick, "seems to dis ter be picked up." chile dat dat am de first consideration, so Alan gazed at the eager black face be-I jes' unload Peach-blossom, here an' den fore him as though he thought the man

I got ter go right off strait away fur that | must be demented. "How do you know this, Uncle Snick? As he spoke the negro crossed to where And where is this place?" he munaged to the mule stood patiently waiting. In a few ask amid his bewilderment,

seconds the back load and panniers lay up-"Dem as gibs to de poor, lends to de on the ground and the kindly-faced negro Lord," replied the black, sententiously, addrubbing caresingly the nose of the relieved ing, "An' de Lord nebber bide long in de said, "der yer is Peach-blossom, lender's debt, so data how I know what I free as de senate mens at Washington who's know."

allus got ter come when deys called, New ! Alan did not attempt to interrupt the quaint old man, who went on "One day, mere'n monf ago, I found a poor, mis'lable color man, him bracker dan me, him starbed an' dyin', so I jist lend de Lord a lickie by gibbin' to dat poor brack brudder. Poor misfortunate fella, him had herry had book. and he wur most powerfu' gratefu' fur a want him?" asked Alan as he watched the lickle help. Den, when him berry neah him end, him gab me a legacy,"

"How far," asked Alan, "are we from the place where the poor fellow said the gold was? And how do you know, uncle, that it is true, that the story was not the effect of

the fever in the poor chap?" Pulling three large nuggets of almost pure gold from his pocket, the negro held them before the astonished eyes of Alan, saying, "Dere, marsa, does dey look like de mum'lin's ob feber, eh? An' de place whar de res is' ain't more'n tirty mile fro' here now Yer see, we's long way outer de way ob mos' feik new, eben de gold p'ospeckers."

Alan needed no further convincing. His heart beat tumultuously with joy and hope His mind conjured up wendrous visions of wealth, and of a life of love and happiness with the chosen one of his heart. The negro and himself held a consultation ogether, with the result that they decided

to get to rest as soon as they could, rise with the sun, make an early start, and thus reach the gold-goal in good time the next day. "Massa needn't hab no fear 'bout gittin' on his hors in de marnin', 'cos he fin' dat do leafs me put on dat good-fur-nuffin leg

ob his nt make him nearly well by morrer. 'Sldes, me help him on de hoss, an' den he kin keep de leg up straight if he The good fellow speedily prepared the rug saide the tent for Alan, and helping him in, left with a "Cawd bless you, Massa." Alone in his tent, Alan found it difficult

sleep at first, and during his wakefulness he heard the faithful black praying most lustfly for "de noo massa," and for success in their forthcoming enterprise. "Queer mixture, some of these black felwas one of Alan's last thoughts be-

fore he dropped asleep.

CHAPTER IV.

An Overtorned Bowlder. A wilder, rougher road it would be hard to find than that over which Alan Merridew and the negro, Uncle Snick, traveled pext day.

was intens my 9 o'clock the hot glare of the sand, and the blaze of the rocks that flanked their

path, was almost unbearable, yet the patr scarcely heeded it. The power of the treat hope before them. the force of the wealthy quest they were engaged in, kept them largely oblivious to

Toiling up one of the many steeps that my in their road, the negro slid from his mule, let the beast take its own pace, and

able quietly to study his face.

By and bye the watching negro saw sudden light leap into the eyes and face that he was watching so narrowly. The lips parted, and with an eager wistfulness he murmured aloud, "I wish I could let her know."

"Dat massa's mudder in heaven?" asked the delighted Snick, catching hold of the

glad thought the murmured words suggest "Cos if so, massa needn't trubble nuthin' 'bout that 'cos."

The clear, rich voice of the negro broke into a song, and on the still, desert air there rose the sweet words and notes of

Dere am angels hoverin' 'roun' Dere am angels hoverin' 'rou To carry de tidin's home,

"I have a mother in heaven," said Alan answering Snick's eager thought, "out was not thinking of her, but of someon else in England"

"Ah! dat's massa's sweetheart, fu. sure, laughed the happy-hearted black. "Well, bress de Lord dat massa hab 'cided to lit to God an' now-

He paused suddenly and stared straight before him a moment or two without speak Then, slowly and deliberately, as though repeating a lesson learned, he said. "Reg'lar jumble o' red rocks, big tree all gone dead an' strucked wid lightnin', one great rock stick up like monnerment down

in ole Virgini-With a sudden, hearty laugh he turned his face, beaming with joy, towards Alan, as pointing to the objects he had just enumerated in his murmured words, he said Thar, massa, deres de fust tings poor of Jake tell Snick he see afore he come to de

gold place." Alan's every feature exhibited the intense excitement that was filling him, as he saw

and heard this testimony. The pair pushed on, they entered a kind of deep canon, which, for wildness of scenery, could surely not have been surpassed anywhere on the face of the globe.

Suddenly, Alan's horse gave a loud whin-The heat, two hours after sunrise only, ny. Another whinny, quickly followed by a second, came in response. The next minute there came galloping towards the little party two strong, lean-looking horses. One of the beasts was saddled, and still bore sundry small packages lashed to the saddle-

> "Dem's de hosses ob de dead party," said Snick, excitedly. Dey's sniffed you's hoss, massa, an' come to say 'how-du-du' to dere brudder. Wal, dey'll be berry usefu' to we uns, bum by, when we's got de gold an' starts back. No need to bodder 'bout kotchin' of 'em now, dey won't go fur away now dere's anoder hoss herembout."

Another, a sadder link in the chain of testimony to the dead Jake's story, presently stared them in the face, a skeleton by the wayside. Snick silently doffed his hat as he passed

the sad remains. Alan followed suit. A few minutes later they came to the wide, weep, shallow gulley of a dry watercourse, and Snick pointed out a certain landmark which he had before stated was to be the point of encampment.

The pair dismounted. By the help of a stick. Alan could get about fairly well. His ankie was stiff, but the excruciating pain of the night before

The sun had set and the night-gloom thickened swiftly around them. There was only time to pitch the tent before it became quite dark. That night Alan could not sleep. His newly-

awakened soul, filled with a new life, was in full stretch after God. Then, too, he was encamped, professedy, within a few hours' search of a fortune. All the misery and failure of the last two years faded from his mind as the vision of the

waiting gold rose up vividly before him,

He longed for the morning. It came at Almost with the first break of day the pair were astir. Breakfast was hurried over, then their search began. They soon discovered that Jake's story was not all myth, for by noon they had more than \$2,000 worth of gold, either in almost pure

nuggets or rich-bearing quartz. Dinner, and an hour's rest, and they were at work again, the afternoon proving even more successful than the morning had

been. Still they had not found sacks full of the precious metal yet, and both knew that

without a water supply they could not stay long at the place. That night Alan slept from sheer fatigue He awoke about midnight-most campers out do-but it was not use, altogether, tha

had woke him this time, but the noises all around. A howling, whistling wind was abroad and mingling with its din were the scared

whinnyings and tramping of the frightene Rain, a fearful tropical type of rain, began to descend in sheets. The roar of rushing water was now added to the unseen ter

rors of the night. Drenched to the skin, poor Snick crept to the opening in Alan's tent, which, screened from the storm by the pile of rock under which it had been pitched, was snug and dry. (Snick had before respectfully declined to share the tent with Alan). Now, before he could prefer one word of request for entrance, Alan, seeing the dull glenm of his yes shining amid the darkners, said, "Come inside, uncle. Poor old fellow, you

are wet, I guess." "Ya", massa, but ain't 'ticelar 'bout datso long as dis rain don't wash away de gold." Snick sighed as he uttered his fear,

"Not much fear of that." During the remainder of the night the pair taiked of many things, but chiefly of the treasure of the Kingdom of God, this subject being uppermost in the mind of Afan.

The morning broke calm, bright and

cloudlers. A gurgling, murmuring, yellow stream ran its muddy way down what was yesterday but a dry watercourse. The evidences of the awfulness of the storm of the night were plain on every hand.

higher up in the mountains, miles away, for the roaring heard amid the darkness had been that of an awful terrent that had altered every feature of the banks of the One huge bowlder, near which Alan and

Snick had taken their chief treasure of gold the afternoon before, now lay full upon its face, like the fallen Dagon of the Phills-The day previous it had been pivoted

upon a number of smaller stones, and these in turn had rested upon a slightly depressed part of the sandy bank of the watercourse The raging torrent of the night before had sapped this sandy foundation; the giant stone had toppled and fallen. Succeeding rushes of water had swept away the loose stones, and there, like a veritable nest of huge eggs, the astonished pair found an enormous pecket of gold.

form of his race. He leaped and laughed, shouted and sang, prayed and praised in and the came breath. Forty-eight hours later the pair, with both the captured horses of the dead miners.

Snick's delight took the characteristic

looded with gold, and they themselves mounted on their own beasts, struck camp.

CHAPTER V.

And So Her Prince Found Her "Japhet in search of a father" was never more perplexed than was Alan Merridew lost lover. Day after day he wearled out

side Alan, and unknown to the latter, was terrible place where, with bitter slavery, she had served a cruel mistress, but after this he lost all real clew.

He made innumerable inquiries of cabmen, hoping to find the one who had driven Minnle from her house of bondage, and thu obtain some clew to her next home.

But all his inquiries failed. When a week had passed in this hopeless kind of work, he bethought him of a prom-

ise to his American agent that he would

look up and call upon his sister. "I wish I had done this at first," mused Alan. "Who so likely to be able to suggest ways of tracing a woman as a woman?" Ten minutes later he was bowling westward through the streets of London, as fast

as a fresh horse and the street traffic

Arrived at the address, he asked to see the lady, and was immediately shown tate her presence.

would let him go,

Your brother, Charleston Evans, of New York, made me promise that I would con upon you, Mrs. Gilpin," explained Alan.

He wondered why the lady stared so at him. Then, without at once replying, she took up his card again-she had tossed it down on the table, scarcely read, when he had himself been ushered in-and now, reading the name more earefully, said softly, more to herself than to her visitor-

"Alan Merridew, how strange!" He would have asked her what she meant by that speech, but she began rapidly to question him as to her brother's welfare and other matters connected with her absent relatives.

The clock on the mantel chimed half-past 1 while she was speaking, and reminded her of her duty as hostess.

"Have you lunched, Mr. Merridew?" she asked. "If not, and you will take a little with me, I shall be very pleased-ah, there

Alan declared his willingness, adding, "I scarcely know how I am existing this past I get my meals or go without in week. the most erratic fashion, which reminds me, Mrs. Gilpin, that I made up my mind to ask you, on the strength of my acquaintance with your brother, if you could help me in my difficulty." The "I will if I can Mr. Merridew."

that fell from the sweet-faced woman's lips sounded so full of comfort and promise in the ears of Alan that he could almost have blessed her aloud In a few minutes he told her all his story, adding, "and now, Mrs. Gilpin, that I have

succeeded, financially, beyond my most sanguine hopes, I cannot find a trace of my darling my promised wife. Minnie Royal, I have told you what I have done in the way of search, can you help me, by what is called weman's wit?" The eyes of Mrs. Glipin were full of tears, and she was struggling with some halfsmothered sobs which seemed to choke her

I will return to you in a few moments, and shall doubtless have thought of some plan of helping you by that time." Mrs. Gilpin left the room, sent her word of delay of luncheon to the kitchen, then passed quickly up the thickly-carpeted stairs to a room that adjoined the large day

as she said, "Let me go and put back the

luncheon for half an hour, Mr. Merridew:

nursery. Her eyes danced with delight as she ran quickly back to the drawing-room, though she managed to sober her face a trifle before she appeared before Alan.

In a mysterious way she said, "Will you promise me, Mr. Merridew, to utter no ound, to remain perfectly still, while I show you a picture that may suggest to you a way out of your difficulty in tracing this missing lady. The picture is really a tableon vivant, and has for its subject something which I feel sure will have interest and meaning for you."

Puzzled, but trusting, Alan gave the promise asked of him, and followed his hostess up the stairs.

The room he was shown into was a small costly-furnished sitting-room, and was evidently only parted from another room by a pair of thick curtains. He had no time to take in the various effects of the little room, for his houtest

led him across direct to the curtains. The murmur of a voice came up from b hind that curtain, and at the first sound of those tones he started visibly, Mrs. Gilpin looked with swift meaning at

She pointed to a tiny crevice between the curtains, he followed her directing finger, bent his head and looked upon the tableau It pictured a large room, a cheerful fire a beautiful girl of four or five and twenty,

a boy of nearly seven, standing by her left knee, gazing rapturously into her face, while a sweet girl, two years older than the boy, sat in a little chair upon the opposite side, her hand held fast in the young woman's, who was telling a fairy story to the listening children.

"Then one day," went on the fair storyteller, in her sweet silvery tones, "her Prince had to leave his land to fight the great battle of life."

"The maiden was sad, very sad, at the thought of the parting, and the Pris sad, of course, though, manlike, he tried not to show it too much." "It was in the cold, gray of an early winter morning that the Prince's ship safled,

and the poor maiden stood upon the damp deck folded for the last time in the arms of her Prince. Then they had to kiss and say good-by---The speaker's voice faitered here, and a great, warm, sait tear fell splashing on the

boy's clasped hands, as they rested on her Craning his neck upwards, the little fellow kissed the sweet face of the story-

teller, as he said, tenderly: "Please, dear Minnie, don't tell us another word if it hurts you to tell it, but-"There is not much more to tell, Harold," said the fair girl, "for the Prince has never returned, and the lonely maiden waits and longs still for the sound of his voice and

the sight of his face, and-"I believe, dear Minnie," began the little The storm must have first burst and raged girl in a grave, assured tone of voice, "that that poor maiden is yourself, and that the absent Prince is the gentleman whom you

are going to marry, and-" "He'll come back again, all right," interrupted the boy, "the Prince seways does in "Hullo!" he suddenly ejaculated, "I saw

that curtain move," With the nimbleness of a sprightly boy he leaped to his feet, flung back the dividing curtains, and revealed another tableau

vivant. There was barely time to note the new picture before it broke up. Alan Merridew had leaped into the larger room and was holding the joyously weeping

kisses upon her upturned face. "I shall never know another care in life, I think," said Minnie, softly to her husband, as they ro'led through Kent on the afternoen of their wedding day. They were en route for Dover to eatch the Calais boat. being bound for France and Italy by way of

Minnie clasped in his arms, while he rained

THE END.

Mr. Brown: "Good morning, Mr. Jones; how's your wife?" Mr. Jones (who is deaf and didn't quite understand): "Very blustering and disagreeable this morning."-Tit-

hunted London over for a clew to his bother a fellow so much. It's the little over. Day after day he wearled out things that annoy us most." "That's right. thirty-second of an inch long."-Philadel-



"Most sartinly he will, massef?" said the negro, "Fac' is, pore Peach-blossom jist gone hab berry hard times fore he call me boss, an' now him got me fur him frien' he knows he wur never so well off afore,

wot Sursh talks bout, dat knowed dems was pitched, he went on, "De tegney war a wners an' der mason's crib." "I wish my horse did," said Alan a little to a Mex'can man dat, 'long wid tree oders, wistfully. "You'm leabe dat hose to Unku Snick, eber goes

an' he's fist so good as de ox an' der ass

in dis country dat dis chile wouldn't git, der perv'shons turn giddy an' tumble obei some quick, I tells yer. Yer see now, a rock place, down inter canon, mill'ns an mill'us an mill'us o' yards deep. But des With a knowing nod at Alan, his black push on, 'cos de fever ob de gold on dem." face all alight with smiling humour, the self-advertised horse-catcher went off.

In ten minutes he came in sight again, leading the truant back. In less than a half hour, the negro had pitched Alan's tent, fired up a comfortable camp, had bound up the injured ankle with a great wonder and awe, the negro a few odd-looking leaves he had found in the wood when he went for the horse, and was now setting out a meal, with hot conee, man go clean mad an' him die nex' mornin'

"What a quick, handy fellow he is!" was the mental comment of the watching Alan. "Dere, Massa," said the 'handy fellow, at that moment, "dere's de supper ail ready, an' here's de guess ready fur de supper So 'll Massa say grace.'

before the hngry Alan.

Alan, and face and voice alike expressed the amazement he felt at such an unexproted recuest. "No, Uncle Snick, I can't say grace, do

Doffing his immense hat, the negro closed

"Dhou am great, an' Dhou am good

An' we tank dee fur die food;

eyes, and lifting his voice, sang:

Gib us. Lord, our daily bread."
"Dat's right," he added, as he cover his wool-mop again with the patent plan-tain umbreila he had before doffed in reverance. "Dot's right, now we kin tote along

CHAPTER III.

Uncle Snick looked cautiously all around, he, dropping back, walked by the side of as though he feared that some eavesdropper would hear the secret he was about Assured that he and Alan were the only

living beings in the solitude where the camp

great secret. Poor Jake, him been survent went ter fin' de gold in place dat nobady "Dev suffer sumfan fearfu', 'cos dev tool babby kin say merlasses. Dare ain't a hoss de wrong road. Dere pack mule wi'd all

> "Two cb dem go mad fur want o' water, nudder one-de Mex'can-got bit wif snake, else a skorp'n, den dere on'y one let, sides Jake, but dey two go on anoder day. In the barest whisper, his eyes round with on, "dey foun' de gold-"tons ob it," Jake

said. De berry sight ob it made de white

wif a bullet wet he shoot hisself out of his

own 'volver. Jake got feared, so took on o' de hosses an' lash 'em bag o' gold each side ob de suddle, an' start off back. "De fust night he camp, de hoss break loose, an' Jake he lef' wi' nuthin' but hisself to git back how he can. He katch de feber, an' git hunged up on de road in reg'lar queer place, I come 'long an' fin's him. an' nusses him till be dies, an' he leabes me his secret fur him legacy. I, on my way to dat gold, when I fin's you, massa. Now, say you be true to Unku Snick, ch. we go

he had told, Alan held his hand out toward him, as he said: "My good fellow, you may take my word for it that I will stand by you faithfully. for good or ill. An you said just now, there are all sorts of characters now in this wonderful land of America, and one never knows whom to trust, but I promise you

on togedder fin' dat gold an' share em, el

Much moved by the negro's trust in him-

self, as well as by the wonder of the story

that you have an honest man to deal with "I'se sure o' dat, massa, or Unku Snick 'codn't a-telled yer his secret," said the friendly compact.

"Brefful fing for dat Meglean to git bit will de serpent so an he die, massa," said the black, alluding to his fast night's story.

"Terrible" said Alan, "I hate the very name of a serpent or a snake." 'Dere worn't no cure fur dat poor Mex'-." continued the black, "like dere wur fur dev uns in de wild'ness?"

He turned his eyes up inquiringly to the face of Alan as he spoke. the latter did not recall the allusion, and arked, "What people do you mean, uncle?" "De chillen ob Israel, massa, in de wild'ness. Don't yer min' how fur dere sin de Lord sent de flery serpents mang 'em, an' how dere wur on'y one fing ter cure dey bitten uns, dat war to look at de bruss erpent dat wur put up en de pole. De Bible sez dat, 'It come ter pass dat if de river channel. scripents bitted any man, when de man looked at de serpent ob brass, he libbed.

Dat's glorious news, massa, fur we uns. "Why, uncle, what has that old story to with us, for me, for instance?" asked Alon, fairly interested by this time

"Cos de Bible 'clares we's all bitten wid

was full of a great eagerness as he spoke,

massa," cried the black, and his face

"An' Jesus sex dat, fist as dat look of faif at dat brass serpent cured de Isi'lites, so whosoeber looks at de lifted up Jesus, an' billebes in him salt hab eberlastin' life." Question and answer followed between Alan and the negro through several hours. The poor black teacher knew his Bible well, though he put his quotations in the quaintest of styles, and he kept Alan Merri-

dew to the one great point, his responsi-

bility in the matter of either refusing or

Hour after hour passed. At noon they

accepting God's salvation by Christ.

halted, resting for two hours. With a rare wisdom, Uncle Snick left the brooding Alan with the subject of his per sonal acceptance or refusal of God evidently filling his thoughts. When they resumed their journey Alan

was very silent, his face grave and almost

They rode on through the blazing heat for another hour and a half, then Snick herse after horse, as in hired hansoms he Why, they say a horner's sting is only one 'condit a telled yer his secret," said the negro, grasping Alan's hand in the grip of a dropped quietly back until he was close be-

He had traced Minnie, as far as that first phia Press.